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THE LIFE AND TEACHINGS OF CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA

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Thesis

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I. INTRODUCTION

"There was no city in the Empire in which a graver task was assigned to the great scholars and teachers of Christianity than in the city of Alexandria. It was a center of the most energetic intellectual vitality; and there, like the seething of grapes in a vine cluster, the speculations of men of every religion and every nationality exercised a reciprocal influence on each other."[1]

The earliest tradition had it, [2] that Christianity was first preached in the streets of Alexandria by Barnabas, but the Egyptians have always attributed the foundation of their Church to St. Mark, the interpreter of the apostle Peter. It seems that here also, we are first informed of special buildings being erected for the purpose of worship, instead of in the homes as was the ordinary custom. Clement speaks of coming home from church, in much the same way as we do now. At the close of the second century the Church at Alexandria was already a wealthy and flourishing community. Yet there were frequent rebellions in Egypt, and in all probability bore their full share of suffering. However, down to the time of Septimus Severus there appears to be no persecution of the faith.

1.Farrar,-Lives of the Fathers, Vol.I p.350
2.Bigg,- The Christian Platonists of Alexandria pp. 63-66.

In other matters, such as the development of a liturgy, the matter of infant baptism, and the separation of the Eucharist from the Agape, progress was slow,-perhaps we should say, decline was postponed. The fidelity of the Alexandrines to the democratic model of the early Church may be due in part to the greater intelligence and the higher social standing of the congregation. Nevertheless riches brought danger as well as numbers, and the Church at Alexandria was driven along lines which other Churches were pursuing.

Alexandria was most unusual as a city. Within its borders were a famous museum, libraries, schools of philosophy, and a beautiful synagogue. All types of thinkers were present, from avowed atheists to the abstract thinking of the Oriental mystics. It is evident that in such a city the Gospel would have been powerless, had it not been able to produce scholars of unusual ability - men who were able to meet the pagan philosophers and Jewish Philonists and Eastern Eclectics on their own ground. Such thinkers as these, would never have been influenced by Christians of less scholarship and intellectual ability. They demanded those who could sympathize with their perplexities, and refute their arguments in the spirit of Christian courtesy. Clement of Alexandria rose to a position of influence, where Clement of Rome would have hope-

lessly failed. Likewise where Tertullian would only have aroused contempt and indignation, Origen successfully led influential pagans to the faith of Christ. From Alexandria came also the refutation of the heresies of Celsus and Arius.

With such men as Porphyry and Celsus coolly studying the Christian Scriptures as an interesting development in religion, and pointing out with trained acumen, scientific difficulties of the Old Testament and affirmed contradictions in the New Testament, it was necessary for the Church to recognize and profit by the growing connection between the lecture-room and itself. Hence catechetical instruction grew up from an unsystematic presentation by bishop or priest to a regular institution.

The famous Catechetical School of Alexandria, combined with its ordinary duties, a higher and more ambitious function -that of a denominational college by the side of a secular university. There were no buildings, and the master received the pupils in his own house. Origen was often engaged until late at night in teaching his classes and giving advice to his students. The students were of all ages and of both sexes.

The teaching of the Catechetical School was frag-

mentary and multifarious, but it presented the world a richly variegated wisdom. Here is shown the adaptibility of the church. "She stood before the world like the king's daughter of the Psalmist....clothed in garments of divers colors. She could be simple with the unlearned, philosophical with the philosophers; to the Jews she became as a Jew, to the Greeks as a Greek, and in a good and noble sense, all things to all men. St.Paul spoke in one manner to the peasants at Lystra, in another to the Epicureans and Stoics at Athens, in another to the Sanhedrin at Jerusalem. To few men was granted this splendid versatility. But what one man could not have done, was done by the variety of Christian teachers. The works of the early Fathers removed from the sacred writings by an almost immeasurable distance of inferiority, yet have something of the same manifold diversity. They touch the many chords of many hearts."[1] This glowing description of the Alexandrian Catechetical schools may be somewhat overdrawn, yet doubtless in a general way it presents a true picture of the school. Since Alexandria was the center of intellectual life and the meeting place of the East and the West, it was well for Christianity that this

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1 Farrar,- Lives of the Fathers, Vol. I. p.352

form of cosmopolitan teaching was adopted. In no other manner could it have touched the hearts and minds of a cosmopolitan people. We may say then, that Alexandria was truly the cradle of Christian theology.

II. WHAT IS KNOWN OF CLEMENT'S LIFE

Very few details of the life of Clement have been preserved, although in another sense he is well known to posterity through his writings.

Titus Flavius Clement was probably born at Athens. Epiphanius tells us that some affirmed him to be an Alexandrian, others an Athenian, but he well might be both; the one being the place of his nativity, the other the place of his constant residence and employment.[1] This conjecture he states is further countenanced from the course and progress of his studies, the foundations whereof were laid in Greece, improved in the East, and perfected in Egypt. The date of his birth is usually placed about the middle of the second century, while that of his death is unknown. His name seems to show some connection with the Flavian imperial family, being identical with that of the nephew of Vespasian who was consul A.D. 95 and who was put to death by Domitian on the charge of atheism and Judaizing. However, it is possible that he may only have been the son of some wealthy freeman of the Flavian house. He wrote in the reign of Severus (A.D. 193-211) and the death of Commodus (A.D. 192) is a terminus a quo in his writings.[2]

1. Haeres XXXII p.96 (In Caves' Lives Vol.2 p.355)
2. Strom. I.21, p.403 (In Farrar, Lives of the Fathers p.357)

His parents must have been persons of wealth and distinction for they seemed to have given every advantage to their son in the way of schooling and travel, and to have left him in easy circumstances. His books show a profound acquaintance with heathenism, even in its "depths of Satan," and for this reason Eusebius states that he was well qualified to expose the baseness of paganism, becuase he had passed through it and escaped its contagion.[1]

His conversion is thought to have taken place in early life, though the precise date or place is unknown. This doubtless proved an incentive to travel widely in quest of knowledge, and to have led him to study religion under the great masters. He was desirous of furnishing himself with the knowledge of whatever was useful and excellent, especially a thorough knowledge of the mysteries of Christian doctrine. Having listened to "lively and powerful discourses," he tells us something of the happiness he had in hearing from worthy and memorable persons, who had received their teaching immediately from Peter, James, John, and Paul, the holy apostles by which God's blessing came down to his time. For this reason, Clement claimed to be the next in succession to the apostles.

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1 Farrar, Lives of the Fathers, p. 358.

Among the venerable men to whose tuition he committed himself, he has given a meagre and obscure account. The first was probably Ionicus, a Coelo-Syrian whom he heard in Greece, and may have been either Caius, or possibly Dionysius, bishop of Corinth. The second was an Egyptian under whose discipline he was in that part of Italy called Magna Graecia or Calabria.[1] From this point he travelled into the East where the first of his masters was Assyrian, supposed to have been Bardesanes by some, Tatian by others, the scholar of Justin Martyr. His next master was a Jew of very ancient stock, whom he heard in Palestine, and whom Baronius thinks must have been Theophilus, bishop of Caesarea. Others however, seem to think this must have been Theodotus[2] "whence the excerpta out of his Hypotyposes still extant are styled the epitome of Theodotus' oriental doctrine, that is, the doctrine which he learned from Theodotus in the East. The last of the masters he met with as he says of him, but the first and chief in power and virtue, was one whom he inquisitively sought out and found in Egypt, and in whose institution he fully acquiesced, and sought no further. This person was doubtless, Pantaenus, whom Clement elsewhere expressly affirms to have been his master, and whom in the forementioned epitome he styles "our

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1 Ad. Ann. 185 n.IV (In Cave's Lives, p.356)
2 Vales. Annot. in Eusebius p.95 (quoted in above,p.356)

Pantaenus." [1]

The Catechetical School of Alexandria grew up alongside the University. Tradition has it, that the foundation of the school was due to the evangelist St. Mark. However, it emerges into the light of history in the days of Pantaenus, the teacher and predecessor of Clement. Very little is known of him, but the high esteem in which he was held by Clement seems to indicate that he was outstanding as a scholar and as a Christian teacher. Eusebius states that he had been a Stoic, although perhaps by birth an Athenian; that he went on a mission to India and there found a copy of the Gospel of Matthew in Hebrew characters which had been left there by St. Bartholomew. It was probable that he was a presbyter and that he continued to be the head of the school as late as the beginning of the reign of Severus.(A.D.193) The subsequent heads of the school until it fell into extinction were Clement, Origen, Heraclas, Dionysius, Pierius, Theognostus, Peter Martyr, Arius, and the great blind scholar, Didymus.[2]

Clement had possibly acted as a colleague in the Catechetical School with Pantaenus, and on his death became

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[1] Ad. Calc. Clem. p.808
[2] Farrar, Early Days of Christianity I. p. 279-284

head of the school. Pantaenus had left on the mind of Clement a deep impress of his own Stoic morality, his eclectic philosophy, and allegorical interpretation. But it was the originality and distinction of Clement's intellectual character that gave new charm to all that he had learned from his predecessor.[1] He continued to preside over the school for about thirteen or fourteen years, and during this time was ordained presbyter. It will ever be among his chief glories that he numbered Origen and Alexander of Jerusalem among his illustrious pupils. Aside from this there are no records of all the years of his presidency, though it seems the school flourished under his administration.[2]

The persecution of Septimus Severus broke out in Alexandria about A.D. 202, during which there perished Potamiaena, and Leonides, the father of Origen. The decree forbade all conversions to Judaism or Christianity, and was particularly severe in Egypt because the Emporer had recently visited that country. Clement took the commonsense view of the Christian's duty under such circumstances, and like other of the great Fathers thought it his duty to flee before the storm. He left Alexandria, probably never

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1 Paed. I.6,p.99 (He wrote the Tutor after his appointment)
2 Farrar, Lives of the Fathers, p.360

to return. In all probability he had private resources and spent the time in traveling, learning,and writing.[1] Alexander, bishop of Jerusalem, mentions Pantaenus and Clement as "blessed fathers who guided us on our way, and with whom we shall soon be.[2] There are no further particulars respecting him.

Clement was informally canonized which procured him a place on December fourth, in the early Western martyrologies.

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1 Eusebius VI. 13
2 Eusebius VI. 14 (Cf. Farrar, Lives of the Fathers p.363)

III. WRITINGS OF CLEMENT

Clement's writings are often censured as being learned and philosophical and mystical. However it is quite probable that they were written with a more practical purpose and produced a more practical effect than any of the writings of his day.

Clement had a wide knowledge of numerous authors, which he probably derived partly from anthologies. But we are not to suppose that all his information came through this channel. Undoubtedly some of his knowledge came from first hand experience. His use of knowledge gained from various authors was somewhat uncritical and credulous. Wendland goes so far as to contend that he actually copied from Musonius, the tutor of Epictetus, in large sections of his Paedagogus and of the Stromata. If this is true, our confidence in the independence, not only of the apologetic and polemic, but also the practical and didactic details of his great work, is shaken. Nevertheless Clement often shows himself to be a writer of elevated thought and captivating eloquence which occasionally rises to poetic height. It gives evidence of the most ardent devotion to an ideal purpose which he executed with the utmost intelligence.[1]

[1] Cf. the beginning and close of the Protrepticus; and more especially the seventh book of the Stromata.

In general Clement's works are perhaps the most important until the time of Origen. And we must be frank to admit the superiority of the writings of Origen. In spite of his ostensible aversion to the arts of the Sophists,[1] Clement took great delight in using soaring and rhetorical language. His style has been praised for its comparative purity. It is obvious that he was familiar with the works of Plato. He had a wide knowledge of early Christian literature. He displayed candid judgment in his estimate of even heretical works. The writings of Tatian, Melite, and Irenaeus he knew thoroughly. His great work was often mentioned with praise by later writers,[2] and it was occasionally copied without acknowledgment.[3] Whether and to what extent it was copied by Tertullian is uncertain.

I. The Principle Work of Clement.

The principle work of Clement consists of three writings which are connected, not by a common title, but by the unifying fundamental idea of progressive introduction to Christianity.[4]

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1 E.g. Stromata, I., 10. 47sq.

2 Cf. particularly Photius, Codex, 109-111

3 E.g. by Hippolytus, in his Chronicon, by Arnobius, and by Theoderet of Cyrrhus.

4 Paedagogus. Intro.; cf. Stromata VI, 7.1.

(1) The Protrepticos or the "Exhortation to the Heathen",[1] which is preserved in a manuscript in the National Library in Paris,[2] was written, perhaps, previous to 189 A.D.,[3] or possibly not till the author was engaged in teaching (195-200? A.D.)[4] In form and contents it belongs among apologetic works, but it is often superior to them in its construction as well as in the energy of its diction. The object of this tractate is to win pagans to the Christian faith, contains a complete and withering exposure of the abominable licentiousness, the gross imposture and sordidness of paganism. After a most effective introduction (I. 1-10), he shows the folly and worthlessness of the religious doctrine and practices of the heathen, and the untrustworthiness of their philosophical and poetical wisdom (2. 11-7.76). Reference is then made to the prophets as the primary witnesses to the truth; and the goodness and mercy of God are proved from Scripture (8. 77-9. 88). He then proceeds to refute the objection that it is wrong to reject the practices handed down from the Fathers (10.89-110). The divine revelation in the Logos is extolled in

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1 On the title, see Paedagogus I,1. 1-3;Stromata VII,4.22.

2 Codex Paris. 451, Ann. 914

3 Zahn, cf. Eusebius, History Eccl., V., 28. 4.

4 Demetreskos.

its several manifestations; and the work ends with a description of the God-fearing Christian (11.111-112. 123).

(2) The Paedagogus or in English, The Instructor, in three books, is preserved in several manuscripts.[1] It was written after the Protrepticos, and before the Stromata.[2] It was intended so to prepare the souls of those enrolled in the number of (ripe Christian) men, as to make them capable of receiving gnostic knowledge. After a characterization of the Logos as a "Pedagogue" (1., 1. 1-3.9), and the children of God as the subjects of education (4. 10-6. 52.), the method of education is unfolded (7. 53-61), and the doubts of the Gnostics (Marcionites) as to the unity of the divine principle and, consequently, as to the possibility of a unified education, are refuted by pointing out the necessity not only of mercy in all sound education, but also of retributive and penal justice (8.62-13. 103). The second and third books portray the proper character of the Christian life and its various details (e.g. eating and drinking, dwellings, pleasures, sleep, recreations, relations of the sexes, cloths, ornaments, etc.). Worthy of special mention are the spirited introduction to the

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[1] Codex Paris. 451, ann. 914 (begins, however,at L,96.155, Potter's edition).

[2] Stromata, VI, I. 1.

third book (on the idea of true beauty), and the description of the ideal of the Christian life, in the closing chapters.

(3) The third writing, the Stromata or Miscellanies, preserved in a manuscript of the eleventh century, the aim of which, in accordance with this title, is, in opposition to Gnosticism, to furnish the materials for the construction of a true gnosis, a Christian Philosophy, on the basis of faith, and to lead on to this higher knowledge those who, by the discipline of the Paedagogus, had been trained for it. This work consisted originally of eight books. The eighth book is lost; that which appears under this name has plainly no connection with the rest of the Stromata. Various accounts have been given of the meaning of the distinctive word in the title Stromata; but all agree in regarding it as indicating the miscellanious character of its contents. And they are very micellaneous. They consist of the speculations of philosophers, of heretics, and of those who cultivated the true Christian gnosis, and of quotations from sacred Scripture. The latter he affirms to be the source from which the higher Christian knowledge is to be drawn; as it was that from which the germs of truth in Plato and the Hellenic philosophy were derived. He describes philosophy as a divinely ordered preparation of the Greeks for faith in Christ, as the law was for the

Hebrews; and shows the necessity and value of literature and philosophic culture for the attainment of true Christian knowledge, in opposition to the numerous body among Christians who regarded learning as useless and dangerous. He proclaims himself an eclectic, believing in the existence of fragments of truth in all systems, which may be separated from error; but declaring that the truth can be found in unity and completeness only in Christ, as it was from Him that all its scattered germs originally proceeded. The Stromata are written carelessly, and even confusedly; but the work is one of prodigious learning, and supplies materials of the greatest value for understanding the various conflicting systems which Christianity had to combat.

It was regarded so much as the author's great work, that, on the testimony of Theodoret, Cassiodorus, and others, we learn that Clement received the appellation of the Stromatist. In all probability, the first part of it was given to the world about A.D. 194. The latest date to which he brings down his chronology in the first book is the death of Commodus, which happened in A.D. 192; from which Eusebius concludes that he wrote this work during the reign of Severus, who ascended the imperial throne in A.D. 193, and reigned till A.D. 211. It is likely that the whole was composed ere Clement quitted Alexandria in A.D.202.

II. A Practical Treatise.

"Who is the Rich Man that is Saved?" is the title of a practical treatise, in which Clement illustrates his conception of riches by an exposition of Mark 10:17-31, in which the hidden sense, not the literal meaning of the words, is decisive: the question being determined, not by riches in themselves, but by their proper and improper use.[1] The whole concludes with the narrative of the Apostle John and the youth who was baptized, lost, and again rewon.[2] The second Similitude of Hermas is used in Chapters 11-19 without acknowledgment.

III. Fragmentary Works of Clement.

Of other numerous works of Clement, of which only a few fragments have been preserved, the chief are the eight books of the Hypotyposes, which consisted of expositions of all the books of Scripture. Of these we have a few undoubted fragments: "The Adumbrations" or "Commentaries on some of the Catholic Epistles," and "The Selections from the Prophetic Scriptures," are compositions of the same character, as far as we can judge as The Hypotyposes, and

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[1] Paedagogus, III.,6. 34-46

[2] Cf. ch. V., Paedagogus.

are supposed by some to have formed part of that work.

IV. The Lost Works of Clement.

"The Treatise of Clement, the Stromatist, on the Prophet Amos."

"On Providence."

"Treatise on Easter."

"On Evil-speaking."

"Discussion on Fasting."

"Exhortation to Patience; or, To the Newly baptized."

"Ecclesiastical Canon"; or, "Against the Judaizers."

"Different Terms."

V. Other Treatises.

The following are the names of treatises which Clement refers to as written or about to be written by him, but of which otherwise we have no mention: "On First Principles," "On Prophecy," "On the Allegorical Interpretation of Members and Affections when ascribed to God," "On Angels," "On the Devil," "On the Origin of the Universe," "On the Unity and Excellence of the Church," "On the Offices of Bishops, Presbyters, Deacons, and Widows," "On the Souls," "On the Resurrection," "On Marriage," "On Continence," "Against Heresies."

Preserved among Clement's works is a fragment called

"Epitomes of the Writings of Theodotus and of the Eastern Doctrine," most likely abridged extracts made by Clement for his own use, and giving considerable insight into Gnosticism.

Speaking of the writings of Clement, Bishop Westcott says his three books correspond in a remarkable degree with the stages of the Neo-Platonic course, the Purification, the Initiation, and the Vision. "If Clement," he affirms, "had done no more than conceive such a plan, his service to the Gospel of the kingdom would not have been unfruitful. As it is, the execution of his work, if it falls short of the design, is still full of precious lessons. And when it is frankly admitted that his style is generally deficient in terseness and elegance; that his method is desultory, and his learning undigested; we can still thankfully admire his richness of information, his breadth of reading, his largeness of sympathy, his lofty aspirations, his noble conception of the office and capacities of the Faith. The Stromateis is an endeavour to claim for the Gospel the power of fulfilling all the desires of men and of raising to a supreme unity all the objects of knowledge, in the soul of the true gnostic. Towards this great unity of all science and all life Clement himself strove; and by the influence of his writings he

has kept alive in others the sense of the magnificent promises included in the teaching of St. Paul and St. John, which by their very grandeur are apt to escape apprehension. He affirmed once for all, upon the threshold of the new age, that Christianity is the heir of all past time, and the interpreter of the future. Sixteen centuries have confirmed the truth of his principle, and left its application still fruitful."[1]

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[1] Bishop Westcott, in Hort and Mayor, Clement of Alexandria, Stromateis, VII., pp. lxiii-lxiv.

IV. CLEMENT'S ATTITUDE TOWARD PHILOSOPHY

Christianity in its earliest beginnings was embraced for the most part by simple-minded and unlearned people. At any age of the Church, this statement may perhaps be made. Such Christians, Origen insists could not be expected to understand fully the deeper doctrines of the faith, and therefore, the teaching must for them be stated in the simplest possible language. But when we reach the age of Justin, who was martyred during the reign of Marcus Aurelius (A.D.166), the church is beginning to emerge from its more or less hidden existence into the clearer light of history. In a larger sense, the middle of the second century represents educated thought,- a variety of opinions in contrast with the revelation of Christianity which was slowly making its way. Justin was one of this class. He represents a new group -that of a class of educated minds who had been led to Christianity by another line of approach than that of Jewish tradition. These could not do otherwise than to maintain the continuity of their development. They had been taught as had been the Hebrew Christians, to believe in a Messiah foretold by the Hebrew prophets, but they also saw behind them, a long and glorious line of philosophers and teachers, through whose preparatory labors they had been enabled to enter in upon the Christian faith. In this attitude of Justin toward Greek philosophy, may

be seen the first great theological issue which divided the ancient church.[1]

Previous to this time, the moral impotence and religious error of the pagans, constituted an indictment sufficient to account for the marked aversion to all heathen learning, which was found among Christians. Passages in the Pauline epistles were quoted in a slighting manner against learning, although those interested in Christian education strove to limit the application of such passages to sophistry, false doctrines, and contended that they implied no censure against intellectual study of the right sort.[2]

The less educated Christians seemed to be sweeping in their denunciation of the philosophic habit of mind. Apparently the philosophers were treated with scant respect. Theophilus says that the philosophers were inspired by demons, and inquired what profit could be reaped from their doctrines.[3] Tertullian and Hippolytus speak of the philosophers and their doctrines more or less regularly in terms of studied disrespect.[4] It cannot be denied that for the most part, the philosophers had not abandoned the gross

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[1]Allen, Continuity of Christian Thought pp.28-29.
[2]Cadoux,-The Early Church pp.319-320
[3]Theoph. II.8, III. 2
[4]Tertullian Apolog. 22 (I.207) Pat. I (I.588)

polytheism, idolatry, and other errors of heathenism. Even Clement and Origen whose sympathies were with the philosophers found it necessary to offer criticisms, though in much milder terms.

There were two questions in particular involved in the Christian attitude toward heathen learning. First, how far was it right for Christians to study and teach heathen classical literature. A study of the Hellenic poets formed a part of the liberal education of that day, and the poets were always associated with the philosophers in Christian criticism, chiefly because their mythological tales offended the religious feelings even more than the theories of the Philosophers.[1] The question was, "Might a Christian read these poems and other classical writings? Might a Christian schoolmaster teach them, a Christian scholar learn them?" Tertullian declared against them, and this was the general sentiment of the Church. Secondly, the opposition to philosophy was based on the recollection of the fact that philosophy was, directly or indirectly, the parent of heresy. Theophilus compares heresies to barren, rocky islands which wreck ships and destroy lives.[2] Hippolytus bids Christians stop their ears as Odysseus did

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[1]Theop. II. 5f Ps-Just. Orat. I.5
[2]Theop. II. 14

when passing the Syrens.[1]

While Justin championed the cause of Greek philosophy, it is Clement who enjoys the distinction of having been the first to work out in more or less detail, the theory that Hellenic philosophy held a place of prime importance in the Divine education of the race. He first of all, denied that Greek philosophy originated with the devil as some maintained, but like all useful things was the gift of God, bestowed upon the Hellenes in the same way that the Mosaiac Law and the Old Testament revelation generally had been bestowed upon the Hebrews. This he held was a propaedeutic to the full truth of Christianity. He further held that philosophy was "the clear image of truth,"[2] one of the causes of the comprehension of truth,[3] and that the Hellenes who philosophized accurately saw God.[4] The Christians brought together the gifts which God had bestowed upon both the Jews and the Greeks.[5]

The function of philosophy under the Christian dispensation, was according to Clement, useful for piety and

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1 Hipp. Ref. VII. 13
2 Strom. I. 2. 20
3 Op. Cit. I. 20. 97
4 Op. Cit. I. 19. 94
5 Op. Cit. VI v.42 xvii. 160

does not drag us away from the faith or ruin the life. [1] Nor does he shrink from quoting the writings of the philosophers in his own works, maintaining that these writers should be studied and quoted for the full purpose of Christian knowledge and propaganda.[2] Origen seems to have accepted the position of his predecessor without question, and defended himself in a letter against some who criticized him for his proficiency in Greek learning.[3]

Christianity itself, during this period became largely a philosophy. The need of meeting the attacks of the thinkers among the Greeks, drove the Christian leaders to make the philosophical habit of mind their own. Great thinkers like Clement and Origen were masters of Hellenic philosophy. Clement depended upon the Roman philosopher Musonius Rufus[4] and chose as a fitting designation for the fully developed Christian, the term "Gnostic." He maintained that while learning was not necessary for a believer, it was highly beneficial, nor could all things declared in the faith be understood without it.[5]

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1 Op. Cit. I. ii.20
2 Op. Cit. I. i. 15 ii. 19 vi. 35 ix. 43-45
3 Eus. HE vi xix 11-14 Gregorius (Paneg.x 127f,xi.139 xiv.. 162)
4 Neumann SK 114. Harnack KS 141f
5 Strom. L vi. 35f

In a summary of the position of Greek philosophy as held by Clement and Origen, Cadoux in his Early Church and the World[1] has this excellent paragraph. "Not only does the Gnostic prefer Hellenic philosophy to any form of recreation, and feast on it as on a kind of dessert at supper,[2] but philosophy is also the Christian's serious business, alike for women as well as men.[3] "Is it not needful," asks Clement, "for him who longs to attain the power of God to discuss intellectual subjects philosophically?"[4] In Minucius' dialogue, Octavius is represented as arguing that poverty and humble rank do not disqualify men for philosophy.[5] Dionysius of Alexandria speaks of the great pleasure of philosophizing.[6]....Origen taught philosophy and other studies as an aid to the understanding of Scriptural and religious truth. He denied the charge that Christians had no respect for wisdom and called only the the unlearned;[7] and heartily agreed with Celsus that an education is no hindrance to the knowledge of God.[8] Most significant of all, it was Origen, the great pupil of Clement

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1 Cadoux, Early Church and the World p. 329
2 Strom. VI xviii 162
3 Strom. IV viii 62
4 Strom. I, lx, 44
5 Minuc. xvl 5f
6 Dion. Alex (Feltoe 138f)
7 Orig. Cels. iii. 45-48
8 Orig. Cels. iii. 49

who first attempted the truly philosophic task of presenting the whole substance of the Christian doctrine in the form of a methodically articulated system.[1] With this review of the philosophical preparation of Clement, we now give consideration to his theological applications.

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[1] Harnack KS 142

V. CLEMENT'S THEOLOGY

Christian theology may be said to have had its beginning in Alexandria. Here, during the second and third centuries of the Christian era, exceptionally favorable conditions prevailed, making possible a new intellectual statement of the Christian religion. The city at that time included large numbers of Greeks and Jews, Romans and Orientals. The Jews were brought under the influence of Greek philosophy, and on the other hand, the Greeks came to discern in Judaism a moral force which was wanting in heathenism. With the coming of the Christian religion, there appeared the solution of the problem of the Jews and the Greeks in the higher synthesis of a new theology.

Clement of Alexandria is rightly called the Father of Greek theology. Pantanaeus, his predecessor in the theological school is little known, except that he was an earnest adherent of the Stoic philosophy. With Clement theology became the crowning stage of piety, and the highest philosophy of the Greeks was given a legitimate place within the Church. According to Clement, the task of theology consisted in utilizing the historical traditions which made the Christian communion imperative; and in showing also, the Gospel to be the highest revelation of the Logos, who has given abundant evidence of his presence wherever

man arises above the level of nature, and can therefore, be traced throughout the whole of humanity.

At this point it may be well to consider that Church tradition came to be completely transformed into a Greek philosophy of religion on the historical basis. It can be readily seen, that with the conflicting elements of Jewish or even Christian tradition and Greek philosophy as soon as the self-sufficiency of the Greek sage should supplant the feeling of the man who lived by the grace of God, there would be a secularization of the Church. One difficulty however, lay in the fact that Iraeneus had set up as authorities, much which had but little to do with the Gospel. Clement would avoid this narrow and cramped condition. He could justly say to his opponents, "If the things we say appear to some people diverse from the Scriptures of the Lord, let them know that they draw inspiration and life therefrom and, making these their starting-point give their meaning only, not their letter.[1] No doubt, Clement conceived the aim of the whole traditional material to be that of Greek philosophy, but he blends this with the object which the Gospel sets before

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[1] Strom. VII 1.1 In several passages of his main work Clement refers to those Churchmen who viewed speculative thought as dangerous.

the Church,- that is to be rich in God, and to receive life and strength from Him. The Greek spirit is thus combined in Clement with the faith of the Church in a way which is characteristically fresh and unsophisticated. The Gnostics and the Apologists were here excelled, and Christianity became a science in literary form, which assumed a place of equal rank by the side of secular literature.

The Doctrine of God

Clement's doctrine of God was wrought out amidst the attacks of a philosophy which everywhere was seeking to banish God from His creation. This tendency sprang from a growing consciousness of sin. Interest in other lines of speculation was declining, and the ethical purpose of religion was given a prominence, by comparison with which all else seemed unimportant. But Stoicism had failed the dark mood of the age, and thought was turning again to Plato. In the midst of this transition, Clement does not hesitate to speak of God whose life is sufficient in itself without creation. His main interest however is always in the immanence of God. Christ is everywhere presented by him as Deity indwelling the world, while the world itself is viewed as a part of the organic whole moving on toward exalted destiny in the Divine order.

Closely connected with his idea of God is the question, How is God to be known? While Philo dwells upon the lessons to be learned from the order and beauty of creation, Clement knows the world only through books. The channelways of Scripture and abstract reason are his only approach to revelation. The baptized one is by virtue of that baptism purified from his sins and initiated into what was known as the "Little Mysteries." With this he

becomes ripe for the "Greater Mysteries" -for Epopteia or Gnosis, the scientific knowledge of God. From this he is led on by the method of Analysis or Elimination to a more perfect conception of God. He says, "Stripping from concrete existence all physical attributes, taking away from it in the next place the three dimensions of space, we arrive at the conception of a point having position."[1] Then by taking a further step and rejecting position itself, the last attainable abstraction is reached - a Monad in its purity. Clement holds,therefore, that we cannot know what God is, only what he is not." "He is neither unity nor number; He has neither accident nor substance. Names denote other qualities or relations; God has neither. He is formless and nameless, though we sometimes give him titles, which are not to be taken in their proper sense; the One, the Godd, Intelligence or Existence, or Father, or God, or Creator, or Lord." These are but honorable phrases which we use, not because they really describe the Eternal, but that our understanding may have something to lean upon.[2] This doctrine shows very strongly the influence, either of Neo-Platonism, or of that which produced Neo-Platonism.

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[1] Strom.V.11.71; 12.81ff. VI.18. 166. Cf. also II.2.6
[2] Bigg,- Christian Platonists of Alexandria pp.92-93

The next step in his development of the idea of God is to find some means of restoring positive content to negative abstraction. The Supreme Being must be given again the Reality and Actuality which has been deprived Him by this appalling definition. This Clement proceeds to do in his Doctrine of the Son.[1]

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[1] Bigg,- Christian Platonists of Alexandria pp.93ff.

The Doctrine of the Son

The idea of God reduced to an abstraction by the method of analysis, must be rehabilitated. Emptied of all positive content, some way must be found to restore to the Supreme Being the necessary Actuality. This is done in a unique manner through the doctrine of the Son. "The God then, being indemonstrable is not the onject of knowledge; but the Son is Wisdom and knowledge, and Truth, and whatever else is akin to these, and so is capable of demonstration and definition. All powers of the Divine Nature, gathered into one, complete the idea of the Son; but He is infinite as regards each of His powers. He is then not absolutely One as Unity, nor Many as divisible, but One as All is One. Hence He is All. For He is a circle, all the powers being orbed and united in Him.[1] "Thus falling back upon the Pythagorean mode of statement," says Mr. Bigg, "the Son is the circle of which the Father is the central point. He is the ideal Many, the Mind, of which the Father is the principle of identity. He is in fact the consciousness of God."[2]

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1 Strom. IV. 25. 156
2 Biggs,- Christian Platonists of Alexandria, p.94

With this theological conception, Clement takes a bold step - one from which Philo recoiled. He has made a sharp distinction between the thinker and the thought, between Mind and its unknown foundation. Zahn maintains that Clement expressly denied to God any consciousness of the external world; that He sees the object only as mirrored in His Son.[1] Biggs thinks that here is the beginning of Neo-Platonism, and that Ammonius Saccas was himself indebted to Clement. The conception of the Absolute God, he may however, have drawn from Aristotle through Basilides or Valentinus.

In our discussion of the Doctrine of the Son, it will be necessary to give attention also to the theological doctrines involved in Clement's conception or closely connected with it.

The Incarnation. Clement does not formally demonstrate the connection between the historic personality of Jesus and the Deity incarnated. His faith is such that he feels no necessity for a labored demonstration. He regards the incarnation, not as something new and strange, nor as an abrupt break in the continuity of man's history. It had not been decreed merely to avoid some impending

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1 Zahn,- Forsch iii.77 quoted by Biggs, Chr. Platonists p.94

catastrophe, nor was it a mere historical event by which He came into the world from a distance. Christ was in the world before He came in the flesh, and was thereby preparing it for His visible coming. He was the "indwelling Deity" and therefore, in some sense already universally incarnated as the light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

Revelation. One of the effects of this position was the tendency to regard the prophecies of the Advent as entering into the organic processes of history. And furthermore, it saw in the spiritual life of mankind the foreshadowings of Him who was to complete humanity and become Himself the fulfillment of the whole creation. It was because Deity indwelt humanity, that the human reason partook of the very nature of that which was Divine. Clement was forced therefore, to see in the highest products of reason, the fruit of Divine revelation. For this reason he makes no distinction between natural and revealed religion, between what man discovers and God reveals. All that was true and well-said in Greek philosophy, he regarded as truly inspired as that which was proclaimed by Jewish prophets and seers. The higher activities of human thought are only the process by which the revelation of truth is brought to man, and inspiration is the God-

given insight which enables men to read aright the truth which God reveals.[1]

The Logos. The idea of the indwelling Deity leads directly to the thought of the Logos. This Logos is constitutionally and organically related to the human soul. Man is therefore, made in the Divine image - a truth which is developed with greater clearness by Clement than by any other of the ancient writers. This has been called Clement's "theological principle" and is the point of departure for his treatment of sin and redemption, which will be considered later.

The Logos as the Greeks regarded it was the rational and moral principle in all stages of development. Clement so regarded it, but also maintained that the Logos was Christ. As the Logos, Christ was the teacher not only in cases where an intelligent self-restraint as understood by the ancients, bridles the passions and instincts and wards off excesses of all kinds; but He was also the course of revelation of a higher kind, wherever love to God alone determines the whole life and exalts man above that which is merely fleshly and sensual. By this means, Clement was enabled to see, what the Gnostic moralists regarded as

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[1] Allen, -Continuity of Christian Thought pp.46-48

contrasts, as merely stages in one general progress,-all being determined by the Logos. By this means he succeeded in viewing the motley society represented in the Church of his time as a unity,- a humanity under the training of the Logos or the Great Teacher. His speculation therefore did not drive him out of the Church, it enabled him rather, to understand the multiplicity of forms she contained and enabled him to properly estimate them.[1]

Subordinationism. Clement's treatment of Christology everywhere supposes the Unity, Equality and Eternity of the First and Second Persons. Many of the phrases he applies to the Son are borrowed from Philo,-such as "the Name," "the Face", "the House of God;" but he had also learned from Christian writers to speak of Christ as"begotten of the will of the Father." The purpose of the Son he did not limit merely to creation, for such a position, he maintained, would only mean that the difference of Persons is first manifested in their external relations. He also rejects the distinction between the Spoken and Unspoken Word.[2] God is just from all eternity, because the Son is in, yet distinct from, the Father, so that the equipoise of knowledge and love between the two is the first

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[1] Harnack, History of Dogma pp.327-329 Vol.II.
[2] Strom. V. 1.6

idea of justice.[1]

The mission of the Son implied in his very name, finds expression in a celebrated passage of the Stromateis. All rational existence is conceived as "a vast and graduated hierarchy, like a chain of iron rings, each sustaining and sustained, each saving and saved, held together by the magnetic force of the Holy Spirit which is Faith. It is the belief in the solidarity of all that thinks and feels, which was afterwards the master thought of Origen. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are succeeded by the orders of Angels and these in their turn by men. If we look upwards, the Son is next to the Almighty - a kind of energy of the Father. If we look downwards, He is the great High Priest, in whom all are reconciled to God."[2]

This idea of subordinationism is always with Clement a strictly secondary element. He constantly returns in his thinking to the essential Unity of the Father and the Son. He teaches that prayer should be made to the Son. "Let us pray to the Word- Be propitious, O Teacher of Thy children, Father, Charioteer of Israel, Son and Father, Lord who art Both." Neither does he hesitate to apply to the Son, those passages in the Old Testament which refer to Jehovah.

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[1] Paed. I.8,71,74; 10.88.

[2] Strom. VII.2. 9

The Doctrine of Sin and Redemption

We have before pointed out the key to Clement's anthropology -the point of departure for his treatment of the subjects of sin and redemption. It is found in his doctrine of the Logos or the indwelling Deity. The image of God in man is a spiritual endowment which is capable of expressing the inmost essence or character of God - the germ of the highest and divinest qualities as they exist in God. In the Son, it is that which comes by being begotten by the Father. This image of God in man is the promise and possibility, that the image may rise into a speaking resemblance to God. Here the conception is essentially Greek. The law of God is not conceived as a code of external commandments, but as a law written within the heart. And so Christianity as compared with Judaism, is the passing from the stage where the law is written on external tables of stone, to that which is discerned as having been written within man's nature.

Clement does not speculate on the nature or origin of evil, other than to hold as did others who were dominated by the spirit of Hellenism, that ignorance is the mother of sin. He finds therefore, the remedy in light. He also allows that there is in man a certain inability to follow righteousness due to a weakness or disinclination of the will.

Evil in Clement's view is not a Power, but an Act. Here he is genuinely Greek in his approach. He neither holds to the Platonic "lie in the soul," or St. Paul's "law of sin." Vice,he said, was in acting the lie, and we need not act unless we choose. Clement therefore, in harmony with the usual Eastern positions -perhaps giving them their beginning -did not believe in the inherited depravity of the race. "Reason comes in each case, fresh from the hands of its Maker. Adam was created perfect; yet not perfect; perfect inasmuch as every faculty was sound and apt for virtue, not perfect inasmuch as virtue was not yet actualized by obedience. He fell by lust and so we all fall.[1] There is no entailed necessity between his sin and ours. But though Free Will and Reason, both gifts of God, are enough for guidance in this world, they

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1 The soul does not come from the parent, Strom.VI.16. 135. Adam was created, not as a full-grown man but as an infant. His sin was that he grasped at knowledge at a time when he ought to have been content with childlike obedience that befitted his age.

Clement does not admit any heredity guilt. For (1) God punished only voluntary sins (Strom.II.14.60); (2) The sins forgiven in baptism are always spoken of as actual sins. (3) Infant baptism, a practice which is very closely connected with the tenet of original sin, is never certainly mentioned by Clement (Cf.Paed.III.11.59) (4) In Strom,III.16.100 Clement replies to the Encraitites, who forbade marriage on the ground that the children are accursed. (5) The causes of sin are ignorance (Strom. VII.3.16) Yet Adam is the type, though not the source of sin. (Protept.XI.111)

cannot tell us fully what God is, they cannot bring us into living communion with Him....The secrets of this diviner life cannot be expressed in rules and formulas. But there is a point where grace and nature meet, which is the proper field of discipline.[1] Knowledge must be gradually assimilated. Love must creep before it can fly. Christ has revealed to us all truth, but truth is precept before it is conviction. It is obedience to authority that the carpenter and the pilot acquite their skill. So the Christian life begins in Faith, that is belief in the desirability of the End, and willing submission to the Means in their regular progression. Hence the gate of the Church is the Baptism of Regeneration. Herein we receive Forgiveness, of all past sins, which leaves the mind like a sheet of blank paper, not good yet 'not bad;' we are brought within the circle of light, within reach of all wholesome sacraments and aids. We are started fairly in the race for life, for the eternal crown.[2]

Beyond this point, Clement deals with the Christian life, on its lower and higher levels, -one of the most interesting and distinctive portions of Clement's teachings, but too elaborate to be brought within the narrow limits of this paper.

1 Bigg, Christian Platonists of Alexandria, pp.112ff.
2 Bigg, The Christian Platonists of Alexandria, pp.114-115

VI. THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC THOUGHT OF CLEMENT

In his interesting treatise on the salvation of rich men, Clement of Alexandria makes objection to poverty as a Christian ideal. In a rather unique argument, he pleads that if a man were to give away all of his property, he would be incapable of obeying the Master's command to give to whoever should ask of him.[1] Clement gives more attention to the Christian use of property than the majority of the writers of the early Church. His tractate on the careful handling of riches in relation to the possessor's true welfare, is one of the best from the early Christian viewpoint. It is entitled, "Who is the Rich Man that is Saved?" and is an allusion to our Lord's reply to the question, "What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" -and, "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the Kingdom of God?" These words deeply impressed the early Church. Even after a lapse of nearly two centuries, Clement found it necessary to explain that they did not as such, shut out rich men from eternal life, and more than they guaranteed it to poor men as such. Yet he does not disguise the grave dangers which beset rich men. "The rich man setting out upon the Christian race," says Clement,

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1 Shailer Mathews,-Christianity and Social Progress p.184

"is severely handicapped by the weight of earthly wealth; yet need he not give up the idea of entering at all, only he must submit to the strictest training of all under Christ the great trainer."[1] Everything depends upon the motive, the attitude of the will,-"the stripping from the soul itself and the disposition, the underlying passions, and the cutting out by the roots of things alien."[2] To judge the task impossible would be to make impossible also, the principle of sharing one's goods with others."For what sharing would be left open to men if no one had anything?" Perhaps this is not an adequate argument in favor of riches, but it does stand out with strength against a purely literalistic and ascetic reading of Christ's teaching concerning the possession of property, such as was current in Clement's day.

A further step in this argument is to be found in this, that "wealth which benefit's one's neighbors also is not to be discarded. For it is wealth as being useful." This form of wealth is like materials or instruments for good use by those who know how to use them....such an instrument is riches also. Thou canst use it justly; to righteousness it is subservient. But if used unjustly,

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1 Shailer Mathews, Christianity and Social Progress, Chapter iii.
2 Chapter xii.

it is again a servant of injustice. For its nature is to be a servant, but not to rule. "So let no one do away with possessions," he says, "but rather the passions of the soul, such as do not permit the better use of property, in order that, becoming noble and good, he may be able to use nobly even these possessions." It is to those who have cast away these unholy passions of the soul that Christ says, "Come, follow Me," as the Way in the use of wealth.

Clement takes occasion to utter warning against the danger of riches asserting that "Wealth is like a serpent coiling us round. We must cultivate frugality, self-help, and simplicity." "The true Gnostic" or as we would say, the sincere Christian, "impoverishes himself in order that he may never overlook a brother who is brought into affliction, through the perfection that is in his love, especially if he know that he will fear want himself more easily than his brother. He considers the other's pain his own grief."[1]

These warnings of Clement bear witness to the invasion of the new society by the rich. This invasion is met by the demand that the rich have no luxuries, nor

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[1] Paed. iii.7

nor finery, nor luxurious niceness, but to cultivate"the simple life." But also, the rich man may keep his riches, provided he is not a slave to them, and will spend his wealth on the poor, not on luxuries. It is evident that there is an attempt to accommodate the stern teachings of Christ to the convenience of the rich. The two current, asceticism or flight from the world, and accommodations to the world, here flow side by side, but later are to form two widely divergent streams.[1]

Again he says, "Certainly Christ does not debar me from property. But do you see yourself overcome and overthrown by it? Leave it, throw it away, hate, renounce, flee." "This saying is above all divinity -not to wait to be asked, but to inquire oneself who deserves to receive kindness." "Collect for thyself an unarmed, an unwarlike, a bloodless, a passionless, a stainless host,-pious old men, orphans dear to God, widows armed with meekness, men adorned with love, Obtain with thy money such guards for body and for soul." It should be noted therefore, that Clement does take a slightly different course in his economic teachings to that held by the apostolic church and its interpretation of the words of Jesus.

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[1] Francis Herbert Stead,-The Story of Social Christianity, p. 66.

He does not uniformly berate property and warn against wealth, but in numerous instances points out the benefits of it.

VII. CONCLUSION

Any true estimate of Clement of Alexandria must take into account the age in which he lived, and the conditions under which he labored. Probably converted from paganism, the sincerity of the man is revealed in the intense interest in spiritual things which led him to seek in every part of the medieval world, instruction from learned Christian teachers. Coming to maturity at a time when the world was marked by a clash of philosophies, and Christianity emerging from obscurity was on the eve of rejecting all teachings apart from Judaism, Clement rendered untold service in broadening the conception of Christianity and adapting its message to the Greeks and to the learned of every nation. This he did by viewing Greek philosophy as a part of the tuition of God in preparation of all nations for the coming of Christ. In this Clement is Scriptural, viewing God not in the narrow range of Judaism, but understanding the revelation granted to St.Peter, that in every nation, those who fear God and work righteousness are accepted of him. Here is the basis of Clement's conception of God, broad but intensely Christian.

Then too, we must regard Clement as giving structure in a systematic way to the doctrine of Christianity. He is well called the father of Greek Theology. His attempt

to arrange the doctrines of the Church in systematic form will bear fruit through all time. Bringing as he did, the knowledge of Christianity before the schools of his time, and interesting the prominent philosophers of all schools in its life and teachings, in a spirit of eclecticism, he did as much, perhaps more to establish the Christian Church and further its interests than any of the earlier fathers. His influence is in nowise lessened,-is in fact increased by Origen, the great teacher, and Alexander, later bishop of Jerusalem, through whom Clement's life and teachings received a wider influence in the church and the world.

The grandeur of the aim which Clement set before himself, is a further revelation of the power and originality of his mind. His range was nothing short of encyclopaedic. He aims at the complete training of the Gnostic or mature Christian. To this end he devoted the three great extant works and the lost Outlines. These he patterned after the three stages of philosophic training - the Purification, the Initiation and the Vision. His plan was to furnish something similar to the Pythagorean course for the Christian philosopher. Consequently he has his Exhortation, the Tutor and the Miscellanies. In the Exhortation Christians are purged of heathen error; in the

Tutor they are initiated; while in the Miscellanies they are admitted to the contemplation of the Eternal God. Wescott admits that the plan is magnificent and fruitful, in spite of the many defects of the work. He points out, as I have said, that his style lacks terseness and elegance, that his method is desultory and his learning undigested, yet we can thankfully "admire the richness of information, his breadth of reading, his largeness of sympathy, his lofty aspirations, his nobel conception of the office and capacities of the faith."[1]

"Great therefore was the work of the famous Catechetical School of Alexandria," says Farrar, "and almost immeasurable was the influence which it exercised over the future of Christianity. Yet of its two greatest teachers, Clement was grudgingly denied the title of saint, and Origen- one of the saintliest souls who ever lived,-was of the three of whose salvation subsequent Church writers, in pitiable ignorance and deplorable lack of charity, expressed an open doubt."[2]

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1 Hort & Mayor,-Clement of Alexandria, Seventh Book of the Stromateis, p.ixiii.

2 Farrar,-Lives of the Fathers, Vol.I, p.356.

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